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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BRASILIA 001993

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STATE PASS USAID FOR MARK DYBUL
STATE PLS PASS TO DHHS WASHDC FOR SECRETARY LEAVITT

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ECON](#) [KFLU](#) [KHIV](#) [SOCI](#) [TBIO](#) [PGOV](#) [BR](#)

SUBJECT: BRAZIL READY TO RE-ENGAGE ON HIV/AIDS COOPERATION

REF: BRASIILIA 931

¶1. SUMMARY: Ambassador Sobel, USAID Mission Director Jennifer Adams and CDC Country Director Suzanne Westman met with GOB Minister of Health Agenor Alvares and the director of the National HIV/AIDS program, Mariangela Simao, to discuss the potential for expanded collaboration in health on September 13. Alvares stated his willingness to reinitiate collaboration with USAID on those aspects of policy to combat HIV/AIDS where both countries agreed. GoB priorities for USAID assistance on HIV AIDS are in the areas of: addressing mother to child transmission, a focus on people living with AIDS, and selected activities in research and social marketing.

The Ambassador and Alvares also discussed the potential for cooperation in an Avian Influenza early warning network, as well as potential for Brazilian technical assistance to Africa. Alvares will be in Washington for the September 25-27 Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) meetings and hopes to meet with DHHS Secretary Leavitt. End Summary.

¶2. Ambassador Sobel, accompanied by USAID Director Jennifer Adams and CDC Director Suzanne Westman, met on September 13 with Minister of Health Agenor Alvares da Silva, who was accompanied by Santiago Alcazar, Head of the International Affairs Office, and Dr. Mariangela Batista Galvao Simao, the Director of the National HIV/AIDS Program. Ambassador Sobel and Dr. Alvares discussed mechanisms for expanding collaboration on health issues between the U.S. and Brazil; and addressed specifically Brazil's interest in resuming USAID assistance for HIV/AIDS activities in Brazil.

¶3. The Ambassador expressed his satisfaction with the long and productive collaboration in the health care sector between Brazil and the U.S. The Minister concurred, and noted that this collaboration had encompassed several key public health areas, and involved multiple agencies. Both the Ambassador and the Minister noted that last year's disagreement over HIV/AIDS policy and the termination of USAID's assistance program was an unfortunate exception. Both he and the National HIV/AIDS Director noted that there continue to be areas of divergence in U.S. and Brazilian policy on HIV/AIDS, but that there is ample opportunity to collaborate on activities of mutual interest. They suggested that we "agree to disagree" on issues related to abstinence and "Be Faithful" as a means of HIV prevention, and restrictions related to prostitution, and focus instead on activities related to people living with AIDS, mother to child transmission, research, social marketing and other mutually agreeable components. Ambassador Sobel indicated that he would take this message to Washington, and specifically raise it with Mark Dybul, Director of the Office of Global AIDS Coordination.

¶4. Ambassador Sobel and Minister Alvares also discussed a broader agenda of cooperation. The Minister indicated his strong interest in support for Avian Influenza, including proposed assistance from CDC and participation in a global early warning network being established by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

He also indicated a strong interest in collaboration related to malaria in the Amazon, and other infectious diseases. The Minister mentioned the highly developed training capacity in Brazil for auxiliary health workers, and its suitability for training personnel from other countries, along with Brazil's interest in making its technical expertise in health, particularly HIV/AIDS, available to other countries, including Lusophone Africa.

¶5. Ambassador Sobel informed the Minister about the imminent arrival of a health fellow. It was agreed that the health fellow would work with Ministry representatives to devise a longer-term agenda for collaboration, including university exchanges and mechanisms to promote greater understanding of how each country's health system is structured and operates. Ambassador Sobel noted his personal interest in corporate social responsibility and his hope that such efforts could be expanded in the future in support of US/Brazilian health projects.

¶6. Minister Alvares told the Ambassador that he would travel to Washington (September 25-27) for meetings at PAHO. The Ambassador offered to facilitate a meeting with DHHS Secretary Leavitt.

¶7. On September 15, Ambassador Sobel, again accompanied by CDC and USAID Directors, visited the offices of the National HIV/AIDS Program. Dr. Simao outlined the history of the national program, highlighting some specific circumstances, such as an early national response that included an emphasis on treatment, that characterized the program. In response to the Ambassador's question, Dr. Simao reiterated that limited assistance in addressing mother to child transmission, a focus on people living with AIDS, and selected activities in research and social marketing would be her priorities for USAID assistance. Dr. Simao concluded that any future program would be assured of a "relationship of mutual respect."

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¶8. Comment. Despite the tensions between USG and GOB policies on HIV/AIDS in the past, this is the second time in the last four months that the Ministry of Health has expressed its interest in expanding cooperation with the USG in areas of mutual interest (reftel). We take this as a very positive sign and will coordinate with USAID and DHHS on steps for moving forward. End Comment.

SOBEL